

# Local bands rock the vote early

BY JORDAN LAWRENCE  
ASSISTANT DIVERSIONS EDITOR

Rockers are notorious for, among other things, partying late into the night, making the prospect of waking up early quite a hassle.

But a group of local musicians and one international artist are setting their alarms early for a 9 a.m. concert Saturday on the terrace of Graham Memorial.

A group of musicians including England's Billy Bragg, Chapel Hill pop-punk legends Superchunk and indie-rock forebears the dB's and folk acts Megafaun and the Bowerbirds and the pop-rocking I will play acoustics sets until 1 p.m. to attract voters to the last day of early voting at Morehead Planetarium.

Free coffee and doughnuts will also be provided.

"I think it's great for the rest of the country to see a typically red state like N.C. producing so many great artists and that those artists can get together to try and make something happen that's positive for the state and the whole country," Mac McCaughan, co-founder of Merge Records and member of concert participants Superchunk

and Portastatic, said in an e-mail.

Democratic presidential nominee Sen. Barack Obama's N.C. campaign is sponsoring the show and another in Asheville, both dubbed "N.C. Rocks for Change," with organizational help from McCaughan and others in the Merge camp.

"We reached out to Mac, and Mac was enthusiastic about putting something together," said Paul Cox, communications director for Obama's N.C. campaign.

But even the popular line-up might not entice fans out to rock and vote the morning after Halloween.

"When I first heard about the show that's what I thought, that's kind of a sketchy thing to do," said John Booker, singer/guitarist from participating group I Was Totally Destroying It.

"I have a feeling with the names that are attached to it, people are going to get up and check it out."

Cox was also hopeful that students will still be motivated to come out, enjoy the music and vote.

"I wouldn't underestimate students," he said. "I think UNC-CH students are very excited about this election."

### ATTEND THE CONCERT AND VOTE

Time: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday  
Location: Graham Memorial Terrace  
Info: www.ncforchange.com

This isn't the first concert in support of a candidate or early voting. Superchunk performed in support of Obama with Arcade Fire at May shows in Carrboro and Greensboro, and Durham's Hammer No More The Fingers headlined a benefit for Obama in September at Cat's Cradle. James Taylor performed on campus last week.

"I think young people and voters in general have gotten energized by this election, and musicians have a way to publicly express themselves," McCaughan said.

Booker said that his band has been highly motivated by the heated presidential campaign and is worried about the outcome.

"The economy and the (Iraq) War just create a lot of weight, and it makes people want to contribute in any way we can," he said. "This is the one thing we can contribute."

Contact the Diversions Editor at [dive@unc.edu](mailto:dive@unc.edu).

# Picker tunes up for show

His original symphony to be played

BY JAMIE WILLIAMS  
DIVERSIONS EDITOR

Ari Picker sighs when asked about the past few months, spent organizing the Project Symphony concert, which finally takes place Saturday after months of "lots of coffee and e-mails."

And all that is in reference to securing a venue and recruiting a 60-piece orchestra made up entirely of volunteers.

It doesn't even begin to address the process of composing an original symphony, a project Picker described as both "intimidating" and "a spiritual experience."

He admitted a little bit of trepidation at the beginning.

He was, of course, starting in the face of the masters such as Bach and Mozart who are often the only names given consideration within classical music.

"Those guys are almost mythical figures," Picker said. "They were so good at what they did. I am very humbled by the whole thing."

He tried to shape his mind to fit the traditions of a genre that is known for its discipline by immersing himself, choosing five specific pieces to study extensively.

"I learned to shed my modern musical ear and try to think in more traditional melodies suited for traditional form," he said.

"I was trying to write in a genre that is absolutely horrifying to write for."

"Some days I would just lock myself in a room and come out with a measure, and some days it just poured out."

That modern ear was honed by a youth spent playing in pop bands around Chapel Hill. A few years in classical composition classes at Berklee College of Music led him toward more orchestral and classical music.

He conceded, though, that some pop influence sneaking into his piece was not only unavoidable, but intentional.

"I really wanted my melodies to be classic and memorable," he said.

"I think people could walk away humming it. It has a clear beginning and end. And that was on purpose."

Leah Gibson, a UNC senior who will play cello in the orchestra and has worked with Picker's folk project Lost In The Trees for the past year, said those pop flourishes shine through.

"You can still hear the styles from his other projects," she said.

"At times it sounds very much like a film score, and other movements have elements that kind of sound like hip-hop to me. I would describe the whole piece as catchy."

Picker hopes his turn as composer will inspire others to both develop an appreciation for classical music and work on composing their own pieces.

"Part of the mission is to create

### ATTEND THE CONCERT

Time: 7 p.m. Saturday  
Location: Hill Hall Auditorium  
Info: www.projectsymphony.org

resources for modern composers," he said.

"The more you know about it the more you might enjoy. Ultimately I hope Project Symphony can bring this music back into the mainstream by having the composers that are young and energized."

In addition, the event has a charitable purpose, with half of the proceeds from the event going to Chatham County Together, a mentoring and academic outreach program.

"I think there are just so many angles to approach this show," he said.

"There's the fact that it's for charity, the fact that the orchestra is made up of members of the community and friends and also the fact that it's a new piece of music that's being performed."

Ultimately he's most excited about the piece itself, describing it as "bombastic."

And, after all of the work that's been done in preparation, Picker admits that he's no longer nervous.

"I was nervous a few months ago because there was just so much to do," he said.

"Now, it's kind of just a question of whether or not I studied enough for the test."

Contact the Diversions Editor at [dive@unc.edu](mailto:dive@unc.edu).

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Monday, Nov. 3  
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6:00 p.m.

Battersby is a partner at Reno Productions in New York. His 2008 film TRUMBO, about blacklisted late Hollywood screenwriter Daltron Trumbo, features Joan Allen, Michael Douglas, Paul Giamatti, Liam Neeson and Donald Sutherland.

### His work includes:

- BUBBLE (by Steven Soderberg)
- ENRON (Academy Award nominee)
- ONE LAST THING (starring Ethan Hawke, Cynthia Nixon and Wyclef Jean)
- WHITE LIES (forthcoming) will star Amanda Peet

### other events:

Producing the Film:  
"WHITE LIES" - a case study  
Q&A session to follow  
November 4, 2008  
Murphey 116  
6:00 p.m.

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Student Union Room 3413  
12:00 - 1:30 p.m.

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